

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. Stable slurries for use in the manufacturing of shells for investment casting of metals and for use in the manufacturing of mould and core coatings for metal casting, comprising

a silica or alumina sol having a pH of between 9.5 – 11;
a mineral in finely divided particles including trivalent or tetravalent cations; and
at least 0.01% by weight of a water soluble salt to convert the trivalent or
tetravalent cations to moieties that are unable to cause flocculation of the slurries
~~Slurries containing tri- or polyvalent cations used for investment casting and making molds and core coatings.~~

Claim 2. (cancelled)

Claim 3. The slurries according to claim 12, wherein ~~the~~ cationic component is one or more of iron, aluminum or zirconium compounds present in the mineral or in water; and wherein the compounds comprise ferrous chromite, ferrosoferric and ferric oxide, olivine (mixed magnesium and iron^{II} silicates), norite, ferruginous zircon, ferruginous alumina and ferruginous mullite (aluminum silicate) selected from the group consisting of at least one of the metals iron or aluminum.

Claims 4 – 8 (cancelled)

Claim 9. The slurries Agents according to claim 1, wherein the water soluble salt is selected from one or more of an alkali phosphate, including trisodium or tripotassium; a complexing agent including sodium EDTA; or a reducing agent including sodium or potassium hypophosphite or potassium or sodium sulphite; and wherein the water soluble

salt is added to the silica or alumina sol prior to the silica or alumina sol being mixed with the mineral⁵ ~~that contains at least one agent selected from the group consisting of a chelating agent or a reducing agent or a water-soluble phosphate.~~

Claims 10 – 15 (cancelled)